

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2002

HINCHEY FIGHTS FOR MORE EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDING

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today vowed to push for more federal funds for local emergency preparedness. A member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey said he will seek to provide the funding in spending bills for fiscal year 2003, which begins October 1, 2002.

"Over the course of the next several weeks, we're going to be writing, debating, and voting on the federal government's discretionary spending for the next fiscal year," said Hinchey. "Assistance for first responders and other agencies charged with handling emergencies should be one of our top priorities. Our national government regularly tells us that terrorist attacks on U.S. soil are inevitable. Local agencies are the ones who will have to deal with those attacks and they need our help."

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, Hinchey has held meetings with numerous representatives of emergency response agencies and municipalities throughout New York's 26th congressional district. Through these meetings and a survey he circulated, it became clear that most municipalities have comprehensive plans to deal with emergencies, but lack the resources to fully implement their plans. Hinchey supports a program of federal grants made directly to local entities.

"There are new demands being placed on first responders and these demands must be matched with a commitment of resources from the federal government," Hinchey added. "Everyone has spoken about the critical importance of firefighters, police officers and health professionals in a September 11th-type scenario. It's time to back up the rhetoric with some cold, hard cash."

In addition to his efforts in the appropriations process, Hinchey has also written and introduced a bill to provide a \$1,000 federal income tax credit to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders. The bill is intended to help alleviate the problem agencies experience in recruiting and retaining volunteers.